



Repairing the Red Jacket Trestle

The Red Jacket Trestle, a historic landmark along the Blue Earth County Red Jacket Trail, was severely damaged from flooding caused by heavy rainfall during fall 2010. Repair work continues on the support pier. The trestle will soon be lifted back into place and be ready for trail users again. Blue Earth County’s scenic trail system is a treasure to locals and visitors alike and hosted several events over the spring, summer and fall including the Mankato River Ramble and Mankato Marathon.

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THE COMMUNICATOR

The Blue Earth County Communicator is published biannually to increase public awareness and involvement in county government.



For more information about the publication, or to submit questions and/or comments, contact:

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Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
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jessica.beyer@co.blue-earth.mn.us



Award-Winning Publication

by the National Association of County Information Officers



Blue Earth County has signed on to participate in a benchmark performance measurement program put together by the newly established Results and Innovation Council. The Council was formed in fall 2010 with the goal of serving as a statewide resource for the development, promotion and implementation of local government performance measurement systems.

Participation in the program is voluntary for local governments. However, cities and counties that participate such as Blue Earth County, will be eligible for local government aid reimbursements of up to \$25,000 and exemption from certain levy limits. As part of the program, Blue Earth County will take further steps to assess performance measurement in various areas indicated by the Council and survey residents on highway and park services.

Please take a moment to provide valuable feedback, by completing a short survey found at the following link;
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NZJ6L6J>.

Your input is appreciated. For more information on the Results and Innovation Council, visit the State Auditor website at www.auditor.state.mn.us. If you prefer, you may cut out a copy of the survey below and mail it to the following address;
Blue Earth County
ATTN: Public Information
204 S. 5th Street
Mankato, MN 56001



1. How would you rate the condition of roads in Blue Earth County?
☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

2. Do you feel Blue Earth County roads are well maintained throughout all seasons?
☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Please provide additional information as to why or why not you feel Blue Earth County roads are well maintained throughout all seasons.

4. Have you visited a Blue Earth County Park in the past three years?
☐ Yes ☐ No

5. How would you rate the quality of Blue Earth County Parks and Campgrounds?
☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

6. Please provide additional comments regarding Blue Earth County Parks, Recreational Trails/Areas and/or Facilities.

2012 Changes in Homestead Benefits

What Is Changing?

The 2011 Legislature repealed the Homestead Market Value Credit, (the homestead credit), and replaced it with a new Homestead Market Value Exclusion. *The last year of the credit is for property taxes paid in 2011 and the exclusion begins for property taxes payable in 2012.*

What is a credit?

A credit is a reduction in the amount of taxes due.



What is an exclusion?

An exclusion is a reduction in the amount of value subject to tax.

Computation of Credit and Exclusion Amounts

Even though the tax benefits of the credit and exclusion are not equal, the calculation of the exclusion amount is similar to the calculation of the former credit. Both reach their maximum at \$76,000 of market value (\$304 for the credit; \$30,400 for the exclusion). Both reduce to \$0 at \$413,800 of market value.

Credit = 0.4% of the first \$76,000, minus 0.09% of the value over \$76,000

Exclusion = 40% of the first \$76,000, minus 9% of the value over \$76,000

Example: House valued at \$150,000

Credit = $(0.4\% \times \$76,000) - (\$74,000 \times 0.09\%)$
= \$304 \$67
= \$237

Exclusion = $(40\% \times \$76,000) - (\$74,000 \times 9\%)$
= \$30,400 \$6,660
= \$23,740

Credit/Exclusion Comparison		
Home Market Value	2011 Homestead Market Value Credit	2012 Homestead Market Value Exclusion
\$76,000	\$304	\$30,400
\$150,000	\$237	\$23,740
\$250,000	\$147	\$14,740
\$300,000	\$102	\$10,240
\$350,000	\$57	\$5,740
\$400,000	\$12	\$1,240
\$450,000	\$0	\$0

Why is this Change Resulting in Tax Increases?

There are four reasons why this change in homestead benefits results in tax increases for most properties:

- **State money is no longer reducing total taxes.** By eliminating the homestead credit the State is saving \$260 million per year and this amount is now being paid by local property taxpayers.
- **The reduction in taxable value increases tax rates.** With the total taxable value being reduced by the exclusion, raising the same total levy as the prior year requires a higher rate.
- **The reduction in taxable value shifts the relative burdens of who pays.** With homestead values reduced, other property types (and homes with higher values) pay a larger share of the tax.
- **The exclusion provides less benefit to most properties than the credit.** The new homestead exclusion may not be enough to offset the increases in tax rates and the elimination of the credit, especially in areas that have lower total property tax rates like Blue Earth County.

Want More Details and Information?

Taxpayers may find more detailed explanations of this change by visiting the county website at www.co.blue-earth.mn.us and click on the link titled "2012 Homestead Benefit Changes." ■

Introducing the Blue Earth County Prescription Discount Card FREE to County Residents!

Americans are paying more for prescriptions than ever before. Without prescription coverage, staying healthy can come at a high price. With the Blue Earth County Prescription Discount Card Program provided to you in a joint effort with the National Association of Counties (NACo), you can save money on many of your prescription purchases. The County is provided the cards completely free of charge through the national program.

Any county resident without prescription coverage can use this program. Even if you have prescription insurance coverage, you may still benefit from the discount card since it may save you money on prescriptions your existing plan does not cover.

Everyone is eligible!

- **No income requirements**
- **No age requirements**
- **Unlimited use for the whole family**
- **Pets are covered for medications that also treat human conditions**

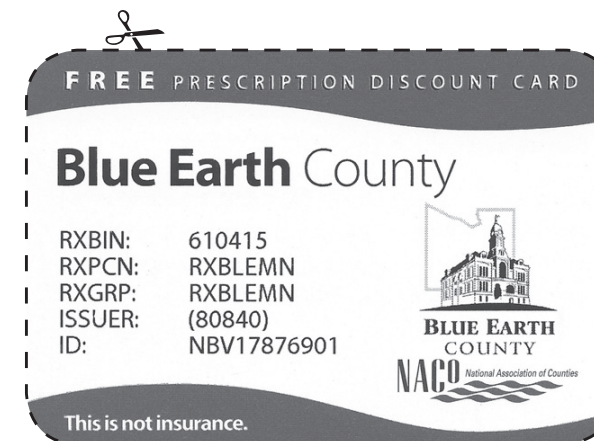
The Blue Earth County Prescription Discount Card Program is:

- **Valuable.** Save an average of 24 percent off the pharmacy's regular price on all commonly prescribed prescriptions. Savings are also available on high-tech and injectable medications through our specialty pharmacy.

- **Easy.** There are no claim forms to fill out and no annual fee to pay.

- **Convenient.** More than 60,000 participating pharmacies nationwide, including locations right here in the County!

To obtain a prescription discount card please visit the Blue Earth County Government Center first floor service window at 410 S. 5th Street in Mankato or any public counter at the Historic Courthouse, Library or Government Center. Cards can also be printed online at www.caremark.com/naco. ■



Participants can call 1-877-321-2652 with specific questions about card usage.

For more information about how to obtain a Blue Earth County Prescription Discount Card please call (507) 304-4335.

Historic Blue Earth County Video

Blue Earth County, along with the Blue Earth County Historical Society have put together a video, titled "Blue Earth County: Then and Now." The project was made possible by a grant provided by the Traverse des Sioux Library System and was funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The video depicts significant historical milestones in the settlement of Blue Earth County and illustrates how county government has progressed over the past 158 years. It also provides an inside look at the rich history of the Historic Blue Earth County Courthouse and a tour of the iconic building today. Copies of the video are available to library patrons and may be checked out at any of the Blue Earth County Library locations in Lake Crystal, Mankato and Mapleton. The video will primarily be used for educational purposes in schools and with other public outreach opportunities. Those who would like to purchase a copy may do so at the Blue Earth County Historical Society located at 415 E. Cherry Street in Mankato.



Don't miss a movie premiere for the video on Thursday, November 17 at the Blue Earth County Historical Society at 6 p.m. The premiere will also feature an opportunity to see the Heritage Center Museum, enjoy theater themed refreshments and much more!

For more information contact The Blue Earth County Historical Society at (507) 345-5566 or visit www.becshistory.com.

News for Veterans

New VA Clinic

The US Department of Veterans Affairs has opened a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Mankato. The Clinic will provide primary care and mental health services to our local veteran population. Specialty care will be provided at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis. The Clinic is located at 1961 Premier Dr., in Mankato. To receive care at the Mankato VA Clinic, veterans must be enrolled in the VA Health Care system. For assistance with enrollment, contact the Blue Earth County Veterans Service Office, located in the Government Center at 410 S. 5th St. in Mankato.

Benefits Available

Recently discharged veterans are encouraged to contact their veterans service office to review benefits and services they may be entitled to. Among these are disability compensation, health services, education benefits, VA home loans and more.

Did You Know...

Did you know that veterans who have service connected disabilities rated at least 10 percent are eligible for prosthetic items furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs. This could include equipment such as hearing aids, eye glasses, mobility items and others.

Please contact Blue Earth County Veterans Services at (507) 304-4246 with any veterans related questions.

BEC Advisory Committee and Task Force

Blue Earth County Human Services is seeking applicants for the Human Services Advisory Committee and Task Force which is appointed by the Blue Earth County Commissioners. This committee is authorized by law to fulfill specific responsibilities in relation to a County's operation of its Human Services programs. The purpose of the committee is to provide input to the County Board relating to service developments, priorities, budgeting and evaluation within the Human Services Department. This includes the program areas of mental health, community health, social services and financial assistance.

For more information or to apply to serve on an advisory committee or task force contact Noelle Bruender at (507) 304-4064 or by e-mail at noelle.bruender@co.blue-earth.mn.us.

Participants Needed for
2012 Citizens Academy



PUBLIC WORKS

Interested in Learning More About County Government & Getting Involved?

Apply for the 2012
Blue Earth County Citizens Academy!

Get an inside look at county functions through six hands-on sessions with facility tours and the opportunity to meet the people behind the services on selected Tuesday evenings in March and April 2012.

To learn more contact Jessica Beyer at (507) 304-4491 or by e-mail at jessica.beyer@co.blue-earth.mn.us.

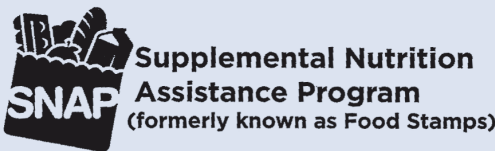


Citizens Academy participants learn more about road and bridge projects from Alan Forsberg, County Engineer.

SNAP/Food Stamps can help you have more money for food

You may be able to get benefits if you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), General Assistance (GA), Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA), Transition Year Child Care, Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Assistance (CCAP) or if you have qualifying monthly income.

Second Harvest Heartland can help with application screening and assistance. Contact us at: 651-209-7963 or 1-888-339-3663, Ext. 7963. Visit us online at: 2harvest.org/SNAP.



2011 Construction Projects

By Alan Forsberg, County Engineer and Public Works Director

The 2011 Blue Earth County Highway Department construction season continues to be busy with a number of challenging road and bridge projects underway in addition to the wrap-up of programmed annual road maintenance.



Road Projects

CSAH 10

CSAH 10 from TH 22 at Beauford to TH 66 at Good Thunder is currently under construction. Deteriorated pavement is being recycled and new bituminous pavement placed. Old culverts are being replaced and drainage improvements being made. In addition, a right angle corner and sharp curve are being converted to smooth, safe and efficient curves in the center of the project. Weather permitting, the work will be completed this fall.

The patience and cooperation of the public is appreciated during this construction period.

With over 700 miles of county highway serving as vital farm to market freight links and providing access to our citizen's needs, it is important that a regular program of highway rehabilitation and safety improvements be maintained. The demands of heavier and more frequent trucks as well as growing traffic volumes in the Mankato area continue to challenge our county highway system.

CSAH 12 Extension / TH 14 Interchange

Traffic on TH 14 will notice large mounds of earth being created on both the north and south sides of TH 14 about 1 mile east of TH 22 this fall. This earth fill is being placed to create the future approaches for a bridge over TH 14 and roundabouts for interchange ramps. The earth is being placed this summer so its weight will compress soft soils and

prepare a sound foundation for the future bridge. To accelerate the consolidation of the soft soils, wick drains and a sand drainage layer will be placed under the earth fill.

In the summer of 2012, the bridge will be constructed and pavement placed, completing the multi-year project.

This is all part of a large, long term project to extend CSAH 12 from the airport south, over TH 14 with interchange ramps and to CSAH 17. The new road will relieve traffic from TH 22 in the River Hills Mall area, improve safety, and encourage economic development. The project is a partnership effort of Blue Earth County as lead agency, MnDot and the City of Mankato.

Bridges

CR 152, CR 164 and TR 337 Bridges

Construction is being completed on the CR 152 bridge replacement project west of Mapleton and soon will be started on the CR 164 and TR 337 bridge replacement projects in the east central part of the County. The new concrete bridges will replace narrow, deteriorated bridges, one of which has been closed for safety reasons, with modern, durable structures appropriate for today's farm to market traffic. The new bridges are expected to have a life of 75 years or more.



With 125 bridges on the county highway system and another 75 on township roads and city streets, a regular program of bridge replacement is needed to ensure safe and efficient flow of freight and traffic. Under state law, the County is also responsible for safety inspections of township and small cities bridges. The County assists the Townships and small cities with obtaining state and federal bridge funds and the design and contracting process. ■

Rapidan Dam Repairs

By Alan Forsberg, County Engineer and Public Works Director

Repair work to the concrete apron and right canyon wall just below the Rapidan Dam was able to move forward this fall due to the low levels of the Blue Earth River. Low water levels were ideal for this type of work and resulted in a more efficient, safe and effective project. A contract was awarded more than a year ago to fix the concrete apron and other damage created from the spring flooding in 2010. FEMA funds were approved to help cover costs associated from the flooding and also to invest dollars towards hazard mitigation to help prevent future damages. The last major repairs to the concrete apron were done in 2003 when an approved concrete apron was constructed from the dam downstream 80 feet.

Recent work extended the concrete apron from 80 to 220 feet downstream of the dam with concrete averaging about three to four feet in thickness. The apron is important because it helps prevent sandstone at the foot of the dam from eroding and threatening the dam itself. The walls along the banks of the dam and a hole found near the powerhouse were also repaired. An estimated 4,000 cubic yards of concrete were used in the repair work.

The project is funded by 80 percent federal and 20 percent state dollars. The Rapidan Dam is a renewable energy source for the County and typically generates about \$180,000 in renewable energy incentive revenue which is used to maintain the structure. ■



For more information please contact the Blue Earth County Highway Department at (507) 304-4025.

WINTER ACTIVITIES AT BLUE EARTH COUNTY PARKS

ACTIVITIES	PARKS									
	BRAY (102.3 ACRES)	DAILY (75.81 ACRES)	DUCK LAKE (31.66 ACRES)	LAKE GEORGE (4.2 ACRES)	RED JACKET TRAIL PARK (4 ACRES)	WILLIAMS NATURE CENTER (65.3 ACRES)	INDIAN LAKE (112.44 ACRES)	SCHIMEK (29.75 ACRES)	WILDWOOD (28.3 ACRES)	LOVE PINE (2.3 ACRES)
SNOWSHOEING	•	•			•	•	•	•		•
ICE FISHING	•	•	•	•						•
CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING	•	•			•	•	•	•		

Red Jacket Trail Trestle Update

Construction has started on a new pier to replace the pier which was badly damaged by the September, 2010 flood and which subsequently collapsed when the steel bridge span was being salvaged.

The new pier will be made from concrete formed and dyed to closely match the center pier and north abutment. Once the new pier is constructed, the salvaged span, all 157,000 pounds of it, will be lifted by a large crane and put in place.

Additional protective measures will be taken on the two remaining original piers, including steel bands on the upper concrete portion, a protective steel nose on the middle pier and rip rap at the base of the northern abutment. Funding for the project is by federal and state FEMA programs.

Weather permitting, the trail bridge should be open for late fall use. Please observe signs on TH 66 and exercise care in crossing the highway.





1. What are Jail Administration Hours?

8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
The jail lobby can be accessed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

2. What are public visiting hours for the jail?

Monday: 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Tuesday: 8:30-10 a.m., 12:30-2 p.m.
Wednesday: 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Thursday: 8:30-10 a.m., 12:30-2 p.m.
Friday: 12:30-2 p.m.
Saturday: 12:30-2 p.m., 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Sunday: 12:30-2 p.m., 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Holidays: 12:30-2 p.m., 6:30-9:30 p.m.

In order to visit, visitors must:

- Be at least 18 years of age or be accompanied by a parent or their legal guardian
- Be able to produce photo ID
- Register at Jail Administration or Central Control window in the Jail Lobby
- Not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Be dressed appropriately
- Stay under the control of a parent or legal guardian if the visitor is a minor child

Inmates may have one, 30-minute visit per visiting session. A maximum of two visitors may visit at a time and must visit together. This will be counted as one visit.

Special holiday visiting hours will occur during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day.

3. What are the hours for fingerprinting services?

Tuesdays: 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
Wednesdays: 1-3 p.m.
Saturdays: 2:30-3 p.m.

4. How do I write to someone in jail?

Family, friends and others can write to inmates at the Blue Earth County Jail by addressing a letter such as this;

Inmate's Name
Blue Earth County Jail
401 Carver Road – PO Box 228
Mankato, MN 56002

For all inquiries please call the Jail at (507) 304-4830.

Road Safety Tips for Winter

By Brenda Olmscheid, Assistant Emergency Management Director

Facts

- Each year, hundreds of Minnesotans find themselves stranded on the roadside.
- Winter weather can kill an unprepared person who is exposed to the elements within minutes.

Safe Behavior

- Assemble winter survival kits for all of your vehicles. Keep them inside the vehicle where they will be readily accessible. The kit should include:
 - Three-pound coffee can, candle stubs and matches which can be used to melt snow for additional drinking water
 - Metal or plastic cup
 - Red bandana and a plastic whistle to alert rescuers to your location
 - Pencil and paper
 - First aid kit, including any essential medications
 - Plastic flashlight with spare batteries (reverse the batteries to avoid accidental switching and burnout, and replace batteries yearly)
 - Two large plastic garbage bags, safety pins (bags are for insulation for feet, safety pins keep the bags together)
 - Snack foods for energy, such as candy bars

- Some other items that you should carry include gloves or mittens, winter boots, a blanket or sleeping bag, jumper cables, a basic toolbox, shovel, bag of sand or other grit for traction, tow cable or chain, road flares and reflectors. You could also consider an extra set of dry clothing or a snowmobile suit.
- Whenever traveling in winter, call ahead to your destination and tell when you intend to leave, your travel route, and your expected time of arrival.
- If you become stranded, never leave your vehicle. Your chances of survival greatly increase if you stay put.
- Find a safe place to pull off the road when you need to make a call. ■



For more information, contact Blue Earth County Emergency Management at (507) 304-4806.

Blue Earth County Hazard Mitigation Planning

Hazard mitigation is defined as any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural or human caused hazards and their effects according to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan. In other words, looking ahead to potential hazards that could affect Blue Earth County and initiating mitigation actions that would lessen the potential outcomes of such things as floods, tornados, stream and river bank erosion, invasive species, and even infrastructure failures.

Blue Earth County was awarded a grant by Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) in August of 2010 to start the process of revising the current Blue Earth County Hazard Mitigation Plan which must be completed by August 2013. This type of plan is required by FEMA to be on file with every county in the United States and is required to be updated every five years.

Blue Earth County has been working with cities and townships in Blue Earth County to gather updated information for the revised plan. This process of providing input for the plan will be extended to the public through community meetings for discussion and examination of the revision process during 2012.

Information about the current Blue Earth County Hazard Mitigation Plan can be viewed at <http://www.co.blue-earth.mn.us/hazardmitigation.php> or those wishing to comment or examine the process of hazard mitigation planning within Blue Earth County by contacting Al Kluever, Blue Earth County Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator at al.kluever@co.blue-earth.mn.us.



Household Hazardous Waste Facility and Product Reuse Center Use Growing

By Jean Lundquist, Waste and Recycling Specialist



The number of people dropping off materials at the Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste Facility and picking up used items at the Product Reuse Center continues to grow. In the last few years, there has been a dramatic increase in its use. At the end of August, an additional 205 households had been served than in the previous year. With this amount of participation, it means more hazardous materials are being disposed of properly, which protects the environment. The season at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility runs from April through October and serves residents of Blue Earth, Nicollet, Sibley and LeSueur Counties. The facility will reopen for the 2012 season on Tuesday, April 2.

The most commonly received items at the facility are paints and other wood finishes. Also accepted are household cleaners, solvents, vehicle batteries, button batteries and all rechargeable batteries, old gasoline, used motor oil and many other products. A complete list is provided by calling the Waste & Recycling Hotline at (507) 304-4242 or visiting the Environmental Services portion of the county

website at www.co.blue-earth.mn.us. The Product Reuse Center also provides a variety of paints and household products for others to take home and use at no charge.

Services provided by the Household Hazardous Waste Facility and Product Reuse Center are for households only and other programs exist for businesses and institutions.

During the winter months, when the facility is closed, items should be stored away from heat sources, like furnaces and indoors where they will not freeze. It is important to keep products in original containers with labels attached and to check often for spills or leaks. ■



For more information, please contact Blue Earth County Environmental Services at (507) 304-4440.

Low Interest Loans Available for Septic Systems in Blue Earth County



Blue Earth County has low interest loan money available to upgrade your septic system. Money is available in the Middle Minnesota and Greater Blue Earth Watersheds on a first come, first serve basis for a limited time only. It is available to residential homes that are owner occupied. You can borrow up to \$12,000 over a ten year period at an interest rate of 4 percent. Payments will be made twice a year with your taxes and there is a \$150 application fee.

To find out more details or see if you qualify, please contact the Environmental Services Department at (507) 304-4381.

Old, unwanted and out-of-date medicines will soon be collected at a permanent location in Blue Earth County

County staff from Environmental Services, Sheriff's Office and Physical Plant Departments have been working together to create a permanent collection site at the Justice Center located at 401 Carver Road in Mankato. The State shutdown last summer delayed the permitting process for the project. However, the new permanent collection site is planned to be open in the coming weeks. Stay tuned for more details on how residents can take advantage of this important program that addresses both environmental and social concerns for residents.



For more information contact the Waste & Recycling Hotline at (507) 304-4242 or visit www.co.blue-earth.mn.us.

BEC Recycling Education Committee

Applications are being accepted for openings on the Blue Earth County Recycling Education Committee. The Committee is a working committee, and members engage in educational efforts throughout the County. Terms are for two years. The Committee meets once a month on the first Monday. Meetings begin at 5 p.m. All residents of Blue Earth County are eligible.



To apply, or for more information, contact Recycling Coordinator Jean Lundquist at (507) 304-4381, or jean.lundquist@co.blue-earth.mn.us.



Holiday Concerts

Join the Blue Earth County Library and get in the holiday spirit with special guests from the Minnesota Valley Chorale for two special holiday concerts on Saturday, December 3 at 3:30 p.m. and Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30 p.m.

For more information contact the Blue Earth County Library at (507) 304-4001 or visit the events calendar at www.beclibrary.org.

Get Your Blue Earth County Library Card Today!

It's Free and Has So Many Uses!
Borrow Books, Movies and E-Books
Take Advantage of Free WiFi
Free Computer Database Usage
And so much more!

Visit any of the Blue Earth County library locations in Mankato, Lake Crystal and Mapleton to obtain a card.



Don't Forget to Vote Tuesday, November 8



Where do I go to Vote?

Find your polling location by visiting www.pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us. For more information contact Blue Earth County Elections at (507) 304-4341.

Adult Programs at the Library

By Tim Hayes, Library Director

The Blue Earth County Library in Mankato has a lineup of fall/winter programs that are sure to strike an interest with a variety of adults. All programs are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required by contacting the library at (507) 304-4001.

Holiday Floral Arrangements - November 5
Hilltop Florist and Greenhouse of Mankato will provide participants with a variety of different floral arrangement ideas and tips for the Holiday Season. The floral designers will use an assortment of fresh cut flowers as well as holiday items to create arrangements to make the season more bright and festive.



Financial Fitness - November 8

Financial security is foremost on everyone's mind these days and Dave Jacobson provides the audience with helpful tips and principles from Dave Ramsey's bestselling book "The Total Money Makeover – A



address immediate needs as well as future financial security that allows greater freedoms to enjoy life.

Antique Appraisals - December 10

Local auctioneer Mike Miller will examine, inspect and talk about select collectable and antique items brought to the program by audience members. This educational format will provide the audience with a rich and diverse background and history on pieces that may be family heirlooms and have been packed in the attic for years. There will be restrictions to the type of items the audience can bring and the number of participants for the program.



Proven Plan for Financial Fitness" to help listeners achieve their financial goals. This is a timely topic that addresses the stresses of the current economic environment on individuals and families and provides them with solutions to

For more information or to pre-register please contact the Blue Earth County Library at (507) 304-4001.

Thank You

to all program sponsors of the 2011 Blue Earth County Summer Reading Program that helped provide programming to the Mankato, Mapleton and Lake Crystal library locations helping more than 3,000 kids stay active in reading and have the opportunity to take part in 27 fun and educational programs throughout summer.

Signature Sponsor:

Taylor

Contributing Sponsors

Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries • Traverse des Sioux Library System
The Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of MN • Noodles and Company
Chipotle Mexican Grill • Papa Murphy's Pizza
Mankato MoonDogs • Auntie Anne's Pretzels • TY Inc.
Mankato Experimental Aircraft Association • Pizza Ranch

One World,
Many Stories



To learn more about the Summer Reading Program contact (507) 304-4020 or visit www.beclibrary.org

Blue Earth County Library System January - June 2011 Donations

MONETARY

General Fund

Blue Earth County Library System

- Gap Foundation Money for Time
- Circulation Patrons
- Jerry McGovern

Special Designation DATABASE

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

- Mankato Clinic Foundation
- Mankato Area Foundation

MATERIALS

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

- Bea McLean Memorial
- Dottie Barrett Memorial
- Eleanor Meagher Memorial
- Elizabeth Kearney Memorial
- Key Cities Conservation Club
- Shirley Lieske Memorial
- Thomas & Sandra Kwolek
- Water Fountain Coins

Lake Crystal Public Library, Lake Crystal

- Crystal Study Club

Mapleton Public Library, Mapleton

- Corinne J. Dietrich Memorial
- Community Chest of Mapleton
- Duncanson Growers
- Mapleton Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mapleton Sertoma
- Town & Country Days Pie Fundraiser

EVENTS

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

- Gena Zelenka

SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

- Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries
- Taylor Corporation
- Traverse des Sioux Library System

Lake Crystal Public Library, Lake Crystal

- Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries
- Taylor Corporation
- Traverse des Sioux Library System

Mapleton Public Library, Mapleton

- Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries
- Heather Curling Club
- Taylor Corporation
- Traverse des Sioux Library System

VOLUNTEERS

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

- Ali Newville
- Ana-Brit Asplen
- Audrey Rehwaldt
- Becky Davis, Author
- Bethany Children's Literature Students
- Betty Hoban
- Blue Earth County Community Health
- Blue Earth County Environmental Services
- Blue Earth County Extension / 4-H
- Brenda Pfarr
- Bryan Retsland
- Eliza & Hannah Smith
- Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries
- ISD 77 Community Based Work Program
- Janinya Berglin
- Karin Bock
- Key City Kennel Club
- Mankato Diversity Council
- Mankato West Honor Society
- Marge Fitterer
- Mary McGrew
- MSU—Child Development Club
- Nancy Burger
- New Country Minnesota 93, TJ & Lisa
- Nhi Nguyen
- Pam Leinberger
- Rotary Club of Mankato
- Samantha Newville
- Gaoshoua Vang
- Xia Nelson

Lake Crystal Public Library, Lake Crystal

- Lake Crystal Chamber of Commerce
- Maggie Jones
- Mary Norgaard
- Megan Roberts

Mapleton Public Library, Mapleton

- KEYC-TV, Stacy Steinhagen
- Mankato MoonDogs
- Rita Caron
- Sue Morrow

2011 LIBRARY BOARD

- Stephanie Miller, Chairperson
- Sue Morrow
- Carol Jones
- Will Purvis, Commissioner

IN-KIND

Special Designation

MATERIALS

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

- ABDO Publishing
- Amy Heiser
- Barb Maher
- Bridge Publications
- David & Doris Boyce
- Denise Moody
- League of Minnesota Cities
- Leigh Pomeroy
- Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society
- Rebecca Dellinger
- Rotary Club of Mankato—Guest Speakers
- Steve Byrne
- William Weidner

Lake Crystal Public Library, Lake Crystal

- Lake Crystal Tribune
- Minnesota's Hog Farmers
- Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society

EVENTS

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

- Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota
- Coffee Hag
- Fillin' Station
- Lee's Champion TaeKwonDo
- Oscar Meyer Weiner Mobile
- Science Museum of Minnesota

Mapleton Public Library, Mapleton

- Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota
- Mapleton Chamber of Commerce Carriage Rides
- Mapleton Chamber of Commerce Craft Time
- Mapleton Chamber of Commerce Egg Hunt

PROMOTIONS

Blue Earth County Library System

- KEYC TV—Read More About It
- New Country Minnesota 93—Radio Spots
- Paragon Printing

SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

Lake Crystal Public Library, Lake Crystal

Mapleton Public Library, Mapleton

- Auntie Anne's Pretzels
- Chipotle Mexican Grill
- Mankato Experimental Aircraft Association
- Mankato MoonDogs
- Noodles & Co.
- Papa Murphy's Pizza
- TY Beanie Babies



Thank you to all the generous sponsors of the libraries in Mankato, Lake Crystal and Mapleton communities.

If you are interested in making a donation to support the libraries and/or library programs please contact Sandi Braun at (507) 304-4002.

WIC Receives Recognition



HUMAN SERVICES

Blue Earth County WIC (Women, Infants and Children) received recognition from the Minnesota Department of Health for exceeding the Healthy People 2010 Breast Feeding Goal. The goal was to have 30 percent of our infants continue to breast feed for one year or longer. The state of Minnesota also received recognition this year from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that Minnesota is above average with more than 80 percent of mothers of newborns initiating breast feeding. These are remarkable accomplishments, however, there is still room for improvement.

Although a high percentage of Minnesota mothers initiate breast feeding, the percentage drops significantly for those babies still being breast fed at 6 months and 1 year of age. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breast feeding for a year or more. Future CDC goals will encourage increasing exclusive breast feeding (not using formula) and increasing duration of breast feeding.

The rewards of breast feeding outweigh the drawbacks and the baby is not the only one to benefit. Breast milk is the perfect food for babies. It's easy to digest, promotes health and development, and protects the baby from illness and infection. Benefits to the mother can include weight loss, lowered risk of osteoporosis, breast and ovarian cancers. It promotes bonding between mother and baby. Families will benefit also as they will not have the cost of purchasing formula or spend time preparing bottles.

Blue Earth County Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Maternal Child Health (MCH) staff are available to help with breast feeding questions and support.

- Maternal Child Health (MCH) services include a nurse visiting with you in your home to provide support and teaching about pregnancy, nutrition, infant care, feeding, and growth and development. Visits may be scheduled during pregnancy or after delivery.
- WIC is a nutrition program that helps families eat well and stay healthy. The program provides support and help with breast feeding, one-on-one counseling about nutrition, nutrition education, vouchers to buy healthy foods and helps with referrals to other health and social services. This program is income based.

Please call (507) 304-4163 for more details about these services. WIC and MCH are located in the Blue Earth County Government Center, 410 S. 5th Street, Mankato.

Additional information about breast feeding can be located at: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/wic/bf/index.html and www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding.

Family Child Care Providers Participate in Parent Aware

By Anne Broskoff, Human Services Supervisor

Did you know that there are fourteen licensed child care providers who have participated in the Parent Aware program in Blue Earth County? Half of which are licensed family child care providers, meaning they typically provide care at the home of the provider (non-center based providers).

Parent Aware is Minnesota's pilot Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The primary purpose of Parent Aware is to support parents by providing information about the quality of early care and education programs. Parent Aware uses ratings to recognize the quality of early care and education programs and promotes quality improvement using a variety of resources. Together, these strategies aimed at parents and early care and education programs target an ultimate goal of improving children's school readiness.

The ratings are based on a number of factors:

- Family Partnerships: Providers involve parents in the learning process and respect them.
- Teaching Materials and Strategies: Providers use learning materials that effectively prepare children for school.
- Tracking Learning: Providers track children's school readiness progress and regularly share findings with parents.
- Teacher/Provider Training and Education: Providers have the preparation and training needed to best prepare children for school.
- Child Safety: The program space is clean and there are rules that help keep children safe and healthy.

While the vast majority of the programs being rated in Minnesota are child care centers, there are family child care providers who have voluntarily participated in the rating and evaluation process. This can be a significant undertaking for any program, but can be especially challenging for those day care providers who are solely responsible for completing all the steps associated with the rating process of Parent Aware. It is also acknowledged that the providers are taking a risk of opening up their programs/operations for evaluation in which the rating results are public.

Blue Earth County wishes to recognize these family child care providers who have taken the time and effort to engage with the Parent Aware rating process. It certainly demonstrates their commitment to provide quality early care and a willingness to continue to make improvements that will benefit the children they serve.

Licensed Family Child Care Providers rated by Parent Aware:

Angie Knutson-Icks	Jan Lange
Krista Bentson	Mandy Krause-Rideout
Christine Shortall	Kristin Drummer & Kim Briard
Callie & Thad Ehlenfeldt	

For a complete listing of Parent Aware providers and information about Parent Aware visit the website at www.parentawareratings.org. 📄



South Central Crisis Center

The South Central Crisis Center is a 12-bed short-term residential mental health facility in Mankato operated by Horizon Homes, Inc. in partnership with the South Central Community-Based Initiative.

Individuals who use the Crisis Center are experiencing mental health symptoms that affect their ability to function in the community and their everyday life. This may be an increase in symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks or even hearing voices and having false beliefs, plans or thoughts of harming oneself or others, the need for further stabilization after being discharged from a hospital, or monitoring after being prescribed a new medication. Referrals to the crisis center can be made by community providers, family/support persons or the individual who is experiencing the crisis.

Services offered include short-term counseling and support, problem-solving, symptom management and relapse prevention. Nursing staff provide medication education and monitoring as well as education on wellness. The recovery-based setting focuses on hope, personal choice, and identifying supports in one's home environment. The goal of the Crisis Center is to accept people "where they are at" in their mental health crisis, and to avoid costlier and more restrictive higher levels of care such as hospitalization.

The Crisis Center also provides a warm line/crisis line that staff answers 24 hours a day. Individuals can call for support, resources, or to request admission to the crisis center. In addition, a mobile crisis team is being developed to respond to mental health crisis needs in the community. The South Central Crisis Center is located at 521 Pfau Street in Mankato, and can be reached by calling (507) 344-0621 or (877) 399-3040.

SERVING YOU



Drew Campbell
District 1 Commissioner
P.O. Box 1283
Mankato, MN 56002-1283
387-2408 (H) / 304-4282 (O)
drew.campbell@co.blue-earth.mn.us



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Mark Piepho, Vice Chair
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Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4800
brad.peterson@co.blue-earth.mn.us



Ross Arneson, County Attorney
Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4600



Bob Meyer, County Administrator
Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. Fifth St.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4235
bob.meyer@co.blue-earth.mn.us

Board Information

The Blue Earth County Board generally meets every other Tuesday in the Boardroom at the Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse, 204 South Fifth Street, Mankato. For specific dates and times visit:

www.co.blue-earth.mn.us/board/schedule.php

Citizens who wish to address the Board of Commissioners at a meeting must contact the County Administrator at 304-4284 before noon Thursday preceding the Board meeting. This is needed to manage the Board's schedule. The Board will not take action at the time of the presentation, but will direct County staff to respond appropriately to issues raised by citizens.

Write Now!

Write & Tell Us What You Think.

The Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners and other officials are committed to providing quality service to our residents. Responding to your concerns and needs is a priority.

Please fill out the information below and leave it with a receptionist at any County office, or mail it at your convenience to:

Blue Earth County Public Information
P.O. Box 8608
Mankato, MN 56002-8608
or e-mail info@co.blue-earth.mn.us

With which County department did you have contact?

Please Evaluate: **Excellent** **Good** **Poor**

Courtesy of employees ☐ ☐ ☐

Knowledge of employees ☐ ☐ ☐

Timeliness of service ☐ ☐ ☐

Value of service provided ☐ ☐ ☐

I would like County officials to know:

I have a suggestion:

If you want us to respond to your comments:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

**Thank you for your feedback.
We appreciate your comments so
we can serve you better!**

SERVICE DIRECTORY



**Blue Earth County
Justice Center**
401 Carver Rd., Mankato



**Blue Earth County
Historic Courthouse**
204 S. Fifth St., Mankato



**County
Government Center**
410 S. Fifth St., Mankato

**Probation
1st Floor 304-4750**

Restitution/Restorative Justice
Adult & Juvenile Probation, Parole, Supervised
Release and Diversion
Pre-trial Services/Bail Evaluation
Community Work Service Programs

County Sheriff /Emergency Services

1st Floor 304-4800

Burning Permits
Civil Process Office
Request a Crime Report
Report a Crime

5th Judicial District Court

2nd Floor 304-4650

Traffic Tickets
Small Claims Court
Civil and Criminal Court

County Attorney

2nd Floor 304-4600



**Public Works
Department**
35 Map Dr., Mankato

Roads & Bridges 304-4025

Road/Bridge Construction & Inspection
Permits: Driveway, Overweight/Size Loads, Utility
Culvert Sales
Swing-away Mailbox Mounts
Calcium Chloride for Dust Control
Park & Trail System 304-4025
Camping & Shelter Reservations
Firewood Sales & Boat Rental
Agricultural Inspection 304-4025
Weed Control & Seed Testing

**Physical Plant/Safety
Lower Level 304-4249**

Finance

Lower Level 304-4182

Taxpayer Services – Property Information/Passports

1st Floor 304-4251

Property Assessment & Tax Collection
Abstracts/Certificates for Registered Land
Mapping
Ditch Management
Passports

Administration

2nd Floor 304-4284

Human Resources 304-4288
Public Information 304-4491

U of M Extension

3rd Floor 304-4325

Agriculture 304-4143
4-H/youth Development 304-4142
Horticulture 304-4146
Misc. Program Areas 304-4326
Nutrition Education Program 304-4141



**Blue Earth County
Library**
100 E. Main St., Mankato

General Services 304-4001
Children's & Young Adult Services 304-4020
Adult & Reference Services 304-4022
Fines & Renewals 304-4010
Meeting Room Reservations 304-4002
Bookmobile 345-5120
Administration 304-4002
Mapleton Public Library 524-3513
Lake Crystal Public Library 726-2726

**Taxpayer Services – License Center/Elections
Lower Level 304-4340**

Driver's Licenses
Motor Vehicle/Boat Registration
Fishing/Hunting Licenses
Birth/Death Certificates
Marriage Licenses
Voter Registration/Absentee Ballots
Filing of Notaries

Veterans Services

Lower Level 304-4246

Federal & State Benefits
Transportation to VA Hospital

Information Technology

Lower Level 304-4204

Human Services

1st/2nd/3rd Floors

Main Line 304-4222
Financial Assistance 304-4335
Social Services 304-4319
Community Health 304-4319
Mental Health Center 304-4319
Child Protection/Intake 304-4444
Child Support 304-4166

Environmental Services

3rd Floor 304-4381

Planning & Zoning
Building & Feedlot Permits
Shorelands/Flood Plains
Water Wells/Septic Systems/Wetlands
Recycling Center/Compost Site/Landfill
Household Hazardous Waste Center
911/Rural Addressing

Serving Citizens Through County Government

Other County Facilities/Numbers

Household Hazardous Waste Facility
651 Summit Ave., Mankato, 304-4242

Ponderosa Landfill
20028 Gooseberry Lane, Mankato, 625-7301

Recycling Center
741 Waseca Ave., LeHillier, 345-4255

24-Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline, 304-4242
County TTY/TDD (Hearing Impaired), 304-4399



**BLUE EARTH
COUNTY**

visit us online:
www.co.blue-earth.mn.us